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ABSTRACT

This brief report uses tables and narrative to summarize data on remedial education provided in higher education institutions, including the percentage of institutions offering remedial courses and the percentage of freshmen who enroll in these courses. The data indicate that: (1) the percentage of freshmen enrolled in remedial courses and the percentage of institutions offering remedial courses was similar in 1989 and 1995; (2) in 1995, freshmen were more likely to enroll in a remedial mathematics course than a remedial reading or writing course; this percentage had increased since 1989; (3) in 1995, freshmen in public two-year colleges were almost twice as likely to enroll in remedial courses than freshmen in public four-year institutions; (4) almost all public two-year institutions, about three-quarters of public four-year institutions, and about half of private four-year institutions offered remedial writing and mathematics courses; and (5) remedial reading, writing, and mathematics courses were offered in a larger percentage of institutions with high minority enrollment than in institutions with low minority enrollment. (DB)

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INDICATOR OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Remedial education in higher education institutions

January 1998

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The role of remedial courses in higher education institutions has been the subject of ongoing debate among policymakers and educators. Some view remedial courses as a way to expand educational opportunities for unprepared students, while others feel that remedial courses should be discouraged because precollege-level courses have no place in the college curriculum. The percentage of institutions offering remedial courses and the percentage of freshmen who enroll in these courses provide a snapshot of the current availability and the demand for these courses at higher education institutions.

- **The percentage of freshmen enrolled in remedial courses and the percentage of institutions offering remedial courses was similar in 1989 and 1995.**
- **In 1995, freshmen were more likely to enroll in a remedial mathematics course than in a remedial reading or writing course. In fact, from 1989 to 1995, the percentage of freshmen who enrolled in a remedial mathematics course increased, while the percentage who enrolled in a remedial reading or writing course was similar.**
- **In 1995, freshmen in public 2-year colleges were far more likely to enroll in remedial courses than freshmen in public 4-year institutions (41 compared to 22 percent, respectively).**
- **Almost all public 2-year institutions offered remedial writing and mathematics courses, while about three-quarters of public 4-year institutions offered remedial courses in these subjects. Half of private 4-year institutions offered remedial writing and mathematics courses.**
- **A larger percentage of institutions with high minority enrollment offered remedial reading, writing, and mathematics courses than institutions with low minority enrollment.**

Percentage of freshmen enrolled in remedial courses, by subject, control and type of institution, and minority enrollment: Fall 1989 and 1995

		1995						
			Public		Private		Minority enrollment*	
Subject	Fall 1989	Total	2-year	4-year	2-year	4-year	High	Low
Reading, writing, or mathematics	30	29	41	22	26	13	43	26
Reading	13	13	20	8	11	7	25	11
Writing	16	17	25	12	18	8	29	15
Mathematics	21	24	34	18	23	9	35	21

Percentage of higher education institutions offering remedial courses, by subject, control and type of institution, and minority enrollment: Fall 1989 and 1995

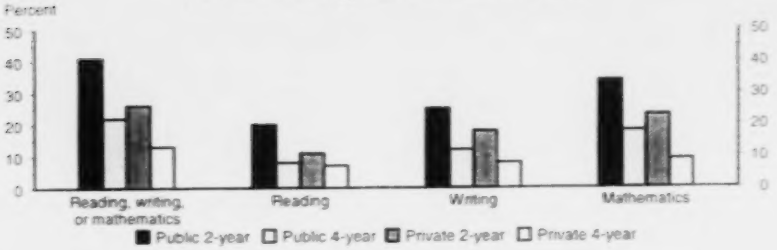
		1995						
			Public		Private		Minority enrollment*	
Subject	Fall 1989	Total	2-year	4-year	2-year	4-year	High	Low
Reading, writing, or mathematics	74	78	100	81	63	63	94	76
Reading	58	57	99	52	29	34	87	53
Writing	65	71	99	71	61	52	85	70
Mathematics	68	72	99	78	62	51	93	70

* Institutions with high minority enrollment are defined as those in which total student enrollment, excluding non-resident aliens, is less than 50 percent white students.

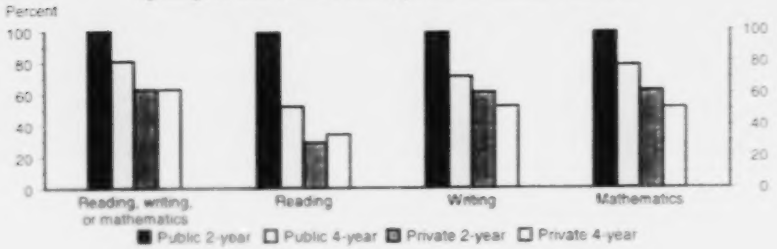
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Remedial Education at Higher Education Institutions in Fall 1995.*

Remedial education in higher education

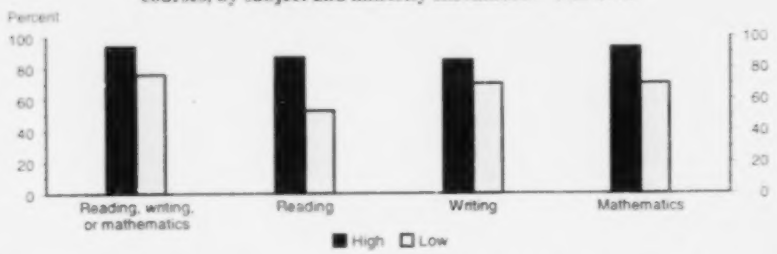
Percentage of freshmen enrolled in remedial courses, by subject, and control and type of institution: Fall 1995



Percentage of higher education institutions offering remedial courses, by subject, and control and type of institution: Fall 1995



Percentage of higher education institutions offering remedial courses, by subject and minority enrollment:* Fall 1995



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SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Remedial Education at Higher Education Institutions in Fall 1995.*

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